

Daniel Christ

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MUSIC IN SCHOOLS.

TENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOSTON ACADEMY OF MUSIC, read at the Anniversary Meeting, in the Odeon, July, 1842. Boston, T. R. Marvin, pp. 28.

A CONSIDERABLE portion of this Report is devoted to arguments, and to the exhibition of proofs, in favor of introducing vocal music into the Common Schools.

The following paragraphs, selected from the Report, deserve the attention of teachers and school committees:—

“It will be recollected that the instruction in vocal music in the public schools was introduced in consequence of the efforts of the Academy; and the government cannot but consider this early education, as they have always regarded it, the most important step that could be taken towards the general introduction of a taste for music, and some acquaintance with its principles, and the means of its cultivation. The attention given to the study, and the progress made in it, continue to be encouraging; and a few years more will show many important results from the care bestowed on this training of the young.”

“It may be said that the knowledge of music acquired at school is very imperfect and elementary. Just so is all the other knowledge acquired at school; but if these elements are not obtained there, the want of familiarity with them is felt during the whole of the after-life. There is a similar reason for teaching music at school, as for teaching arithmetic; not that the attainments of the youthful pupil are all-sufficient, but that they are necessary preliminaries for future progress. They must be acquired at some time of life, if advanced knowledge be desired; and what can be a better period than the earliest practicable one? Let not the skill acquired at school, however, be undervalued. Mr. Mason, who superintends the instruction in music in the Boston schools, says, ‘In all the schools, pupils may be found who can read common, plain music, with ease and accuracy.’ This is an extremely desirable degree of attainment, and when compared with what was common before music was taught in the schools, it shows the effect of the system. The amount of time given to it is very small, being only two half-hours a week, for the two upper classes in each school. If so much can be done within such narrow limits, what may we not expect when the time and labor bestowed upon music shall be in more just proportion to its importance? It thus appears that the gen-

eral acquisition of a good degree of knowledge of its elements, is attained; and with regard to the effect of its introduction in other respects, viz., on the moral and intellectual improvement of the pupils, it gives the government the highest satisfaction to be able to produce the opinions of **THE MASTERS OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BOSTON.**

"The competency of these gentlemen to speak of the tendency of any study, pursued in their own schools, will not be doubted. Some of them were originally opposed to the project, considering it either as a visionary or a hurtful one; and those of the Academy who were active in promoting the introduction of music into the schools, cannot forget the power and efficiency of their opposition. It is, now, not less curious and interesting, than it is delightful, to see the unanimity with which they testify to the beneficial influence of the art. Never was there a more striking instance of the fulfilment of all the promises and predictions of the friends of a measure, nor of the gradual yielding of an opposition which was capable of yielding only because it was conscientious, and which would yield to nothing but the scrupulous observation of facts.

"Some of them say that the music lesson appears 'rather a relaxation than a task;' others speak of its good 'disciplinary' and 'harmonizing' effects; and others, of 'the social enjoyment, and moral and intellectual advancement, of the children.' One compares it to the exact sciences; and others speak of its aid in training the voice in reading; and only one of the twenty-five teachers intimates the opinion that it at all diminishes the amount of attainment in other branches of education, while many of them express their conviction that it does not, in the least, interfere with other studies. If these gentlemen had designed to quote the arguments of the Academy for the introduction of the study, merely changing the future into the past tense, they could scarcely have done it more thoroughly; but as this is not supposable, it must be regarded as a most triumphant instance of the conversion of prophecy into history; and the friends of music may congratulate themselves upon seeing the study of its elements so established in the schools of this city, that it would surely be very difficult to dismiss it. When the time arrives, as it is to be expected it may, that the same teacher shall be qualified to instruct in music and the other branches of Common School education, it will be found to be an immense accession to his power over his pupils' minds and hearts. Its good effects are not all developed, therefore, but much will yet be added to the reasons for the cultivation of music, which have been so clearly and strongly given by **THE MASTERS OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BOSTON.**"

The Appendix to the Report contains twenty-one letters, from all, without exception, of the principals of the Boston grammar schools, and from the teachers of some private schools, testifying in favor of the beneficial influence exerted upon their respective schools by adopting vocal music as one of the regular exercises of the schoolroom. As we cannot transfer the whole of these testimonials to our pages, we make a selection, almost at random, of a few of them. We think the letters here copied will be sufficient to satisfy the hitherto incredulous of the utility of vocal music in our schools. Theory cannot stand against such experience. For our own part, we have the

strongest conviction that, on this question, theory and fact are on the same side.

"BOSTON, May 20, 1841.

"It is now nearly three years since vocal music was introduced into this school. It was then considered as an experiment, and it has succeeded beyond the expectations of the most sanguine. Mr. Mason's instruction is upon the inductive method, and he succeeds in imparting a thorough knowledge of the rudiments to his pupils. We are fully satisfied that children may obtain a practical knowledge of the elements of music in our Common Schools, without detriment to their progress in other studies. It affords a pleasant variety, relieving the mind rather than tasking it; and its effect upon the pupils, both in a moral and disciplinary point of view, is highly beneficial.

WILLIAM D. SWAN,

Principal of the Mayhew Grammar School.

AARON D. CAPEN,

Principal of the Writing Department."

"BOWDOIN SCHOOL, June 16, 1841.

"TO LOWELL MASON, ESQ.:

"Dear Sir,—Nearly three years ago, vocal music was introduced into this school under your instruction. The result has exceeded our expectations; for you have been successful in imparting to a large portion of our pupils a practical knowledge of the elements of the science, and taught them to sing a great variety of songs, in a manner very creditable to yourself, and highly gratifying to those who have witnessed the exercise; and this has been accomplished without apparent injury to their other studies. We are confident that music may be usefully taught in our Common Schools, provided the teacher comes to the task with a competent knowledge of the subject, and determination to command the attention and respect of his pupils.

Yours, respectfully,

ABRAHAM ANDREWS,

Principal of Grammar Department.

JAMES ROBINSON,

Principal of Writing Department."

"BOSTON, July 8, 1841.

"LOWELL MASON, ESQ.:

"Dear Sir,—I am very willing to record my entire change of opinion with regard to instruction in music in our public schools. Till I had witnessed the experiment, I believed it impossible to interest scholars generally in the study, or to introduce it without many disadvantages. The experience of the past three years, however, has shown me that nothing but constant and persevering effort is wanting, to make this study as interesting to pupils generally, as any other. I have not found that instruction in this department has interfered in the least degree with the other pursuits of the schoolroom; on the contrary, I am satisfied that it is a help, instead of a hinderance, affording the children another and a strong bond of attachment to their school.

Respectfully yours,

HENRY WILLIAMS, JR.,

*Principal of the Grammar Department
in the Winthrop School."*

"ELIOT SCHOOL, BOSTON, July 13, 1841.

"LOWELL MASON, Esq.:

"Dear Sir,—The science of music, properly taught, is an excellent *mental* exercise, while the practice is essential to develop and strengthen the vocal powers. We believe the pupils, since its introduction into our public schools, have found it a valuable aid in acquiring the *mechanical* part of *reading*. Of its moral effect upon the young, we can no longer doubt. Nor can there be any doubt that these *schoolroom songs* will exert a permanent influence on the character, if he was versed in human nature, who said, 'Let me make the ballads of a country, and I care not who makes the laws.' We hope soon to find it a study in every school in the Union.

Very respectfully,

DAVID B. TOWER.
LEVI CONANT."

MUSIC IN THE FAMILY.—An excellent clergyman, possessing much knowledge of human nature, instructed his large family of daughters in the ordinary practice of music. They were all observed to be amiable and happy. A friend inquired if there was any secret in his mode of education. He replied, "When any thing disturbs their temper, I say to them, 'Sing;' and if I hear them speaking against any person, I call them to sing to me, and they sing away all causes of discontent, and every disposition to scandal." Such a use of this accomplishment might seem to fit a family for the company of angels. Young voices around the domestic altar, breathing sacred music, at the hour of morning and evening devotion, are a sweet and touching accomplishment.—*Mrs. Sigourney.*

SCHOOLHOUSES.

Several of our schoolhouses are admirably constructed for auction-rooms. They have a narrow passage through the centre, and on each side several ranges of seats, raised one above another, for the accommodation of purchasers. At one extremity of the narrow passage is a desk, making a remarkably convenient stand for the auctioneer; and, by extending a board or table along the passage, goods of every description may be shown to every purchaser, without giving him the trouble to rise from his seat. If these houses were conveniently located for the auction business, they might, doubtless, be let for this purpose, and become the source of a handsome income to the district. But our young children, between the ages of four and sixteen, are not exactly marketable commodities, and, therefore, this facility of inspection cannot be turned to a profitable account. On the contrary, the position of the scholars, sitting face to face, leads them to notice each other too much; every wandering eye meets its fellow, and their mutual observations are an unavoidable hinderance to their studies. If the master steps to any quarter of the room, he must necessarily leave some of his pupils behind him, and thus give opportunity for looks and gestures to pass between the scholars, which it is impossible for him to see or correct. There is no remedy for this evil but an immediate change in the construction of the interior of the schoolroom.—*Report of School Committee of Barre.*

IMPORTANCE OF COMMON SCHOOLS.

We bespeak, in behalf of our schools, the continued and increased regards of all. Especially do we ask of parents that *they* would give to them more consideration. What, tell us, has been bequeathed to us by our forefathers more excellent, in honor and in value, than our system of public schools? What better treasure than intellectual and moral worth, can we either possess ourselves or bestow on the children of our affections? The greater part of us having a competence only, or simply the resources supplied by our daily toils, what gift can we impart, besides a good education, obtained, in its first source, at home, and then from those district seminaries, whose advantages, like the pure light from heaven, flow ever and freely to all? Let the man of moderate fortune,—let, above all, him who is struggling in poverty,—look steady and concerned, as a pilot, to this great interest, which is, as a ship on the waves, afloat at the mercy of fickle, trustless human opinion. Let such, we say, be foremost to seek the improvement, not of one school only, but of all. Especially let such be resolved that, so far as in them lies, bountiful provision shall be made for sustaining these schools efficiently. Our town has, we know, held, for several years, an honorable standing, as compared with towns around her, as it regards expenditures for maintaining these primary seminaries. Long may she be honorable thus; and instead of tiring in the good work, and heeding the peevishness of a blind parsimony, that in the result will work out a terrible punishment, let her rise to even a more liberal, higher position. Nor ought we ever to rest content with barely a pecuniary liberality. In addition to grants of money, however extensive, the times call us to make larger appropriations than hitherto, of attention, interest, influence, time, assistance in every form, to this enterprise. Why are we solicitous that our children may get wealth? What is wealth, if ignorance accompanies it? what, if the possessor have no control over his own spirit, and is more like an earthen pot with gold in it, than like a man? Insure your children knowledge; developed, well-balanced faculties; moral discipline, self-acquaintance, self-government; and it is wealth indeed which belongs to them then,—the best wealth,—without which all wealth besides is miserable poverty; nay, it is more than wealth; it is choicer and more enduring than gems that sparkle on an emperor's brow.

But, parents! leave your children in ignorance and undisciplined, while the cattle designed for the yoke are thoroughly trained,—suffer the God-made and God-like spirits of your children to have at best but a half-education,—and it needs no prophet to foretell what they will be. While they may imagine themselves sufficiently educated, deem themselves too knowing to be further instructed, showing themselves to be, in their own conceptions at least, wiser than Solomon, or than seven other men who can render a reason,—they will be ready to grasp at delusions; to believe whatever astounding stories are brought to them of recipes to prevent old age and death; to shake with terror at every announcement made to them by men self-inspired to predict the impending destruction of the world; to admire and adore tyrants as deliverers; to follow self-commissioned leaders, who summon them to what is indeed a “land of *promise*,”—since it is not one of facts and realities.—*Report of School Committee of Athol.*

BEGINNING TO TEACH GEOGRAPHY.

When your child is two years old, it will know the house in which it has lived from other houses, and should have its attention called to this point. Beginning with the rooms in your house, teach it which way is east, west, north, and south, above, below, right, left, &c., and often ask it, in which room the bureau, or sofa, or clock, or stove, &c., is, and then, in what *part* of the room. Then, if you live in the country, or have a garden or fields, teach it their geography, and frequently ask it where certain trees, or fields, or stones, &c. &c., are; where the woods, wheat-field, corn-field, meadow, &c., are; where such and such neighbors live, and a thousand similar questions. If you live in the city, pursue a similar course in regard to houses, &c.; and when you walk out, ask in what direction home is, or any curious thing it may have seen.

In presenting this subject, I cannot probably do better than to draw my illustrations from the course pursued by myself in reference to my own daughter. After moving from 210 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, when she was just two years old, I observed that, when she passed it, she stopped, saying, "I used to live there." Taking her upon my horse, (which, in spite of its being unusual, I did for her health, as well as my own,) as I rode up or down the street, I asked her which way home, or mother was; and then, turning a corner, I asked, "Which way *now*?" I one day called her attention to a place somewhat unusual in appearance, and stopped my horse, requesting her to look at it, so as to remember it next time. A little further on, we saw a parrot, which delighted her exceedingly. The next day, as we came to the place just mentioned, she exclaimed with joy, "O pa, we are coming to the *parrot* soon." I asked her which *way* the parrot was, and thus embraced every opportunity to exercise her *locality* as well as individuality, eventuality, language, and causality.—*Fowler's Phrenological Journal*.

SCHOOLS OF GENIUS.—Franklin, who may emphatically be called the American Philosopher, cultivated the knowledge that at length bore him upwards to the temple of Fame, in a printing-office, under many and great disadvantages.

Bowditch, the celebrated mathematician, studied the principles of his abstruse science in early life, in a ship-chandler's store, then on shipboard, and ever after, in hours snatched from the cares and anxiety of a busy life.

Sir Richard Arkwright, who received the honor of knighthood for his great improvements in, or rather inventions for, the spinning of cotton, and whose beautiful seat upon the Wye is one of the fairest in England, was a poor barber, until he passed his thirtieth year.

Equal to any of the above, is our own Elihu Burritt, known as "the learned blacksmith," who, whilst serving an apprenticeship, and pursuing the laborious duties of his business, has made himself master of fifty languages.

Never let slip an opportunity of gaining a new idea.

[For the Common School Journal.]

LIMITED RECITATIONS.

So far as the following objects can be promoted by limiting the time of recitation to a certain number of minutes, so far it seems expedient to assign a limit.

1. Every teacher needs aid in preserving an impartial regard for his whole school. Though some studies are more interesting than others; though some classes are more agreeable than others; though, upon occasion, he may desire to save a scholar, habitually well prepared, from total failure;—he ought to feel that the time of one class should not be abridged by protracting the time of another. A limited time for recitation will prevent hesitation in any case. This law, though made by himself, will be his director, and save him from perplexity, and his class from discontent and murmuring. It is not safe to trust one's feelings in such matters, or in any other school matters. Absolute laws, made or received while in the clear vision of what is best on the whole, must govern us when we have not time to stop and think.

2. Every scholar should know at what time his recitation will be required. If the recitation preceding his be protracted beyond the moment appointed for his, he will be disturbed in his arrangements; and those habits of promptness and punctuality, which all the rules of the school should be designed to foster and strengthen, will be endangered.

3. Every scholar should be accustomed, at recitation, to give a clear statement of the matter of his lesson, so far as he has apprehended it, and to propose intelligible questions concerning such parts as he has not apprehended. He should be able to tell what he knows, and also to tell what he does not know, about the matter. Proper instruction, proper methods of communication and interrogation on the part of the teacher, will have enabled him to do all this. This mastery of the lesson, or this exhibition of difficulties, should be absolutely required. A vague uncertainty about the whole subject should never be tolerated. To point out the difficulty is the scholar's part; to assist in overcoming it, the teacher's. Study is the process in the one case; instruction, in the other. This is severe, but profitable, necessary, just, requisite. Now, if a time is fixed for beginning, and a time for ending, the recitation, the scholar will feel that he must prepare himself; that time lost in idleness during study hours cannot be made up at recitation. His part will be well done, and then the teacher can do his. Suffer me to tell a little experience here; not the experience of success, but of failure. I thought it needful to save the lost time of my pupils. It was a kind thought in appearance; it was, in reality, unmerciful, for it had no power in it to "deliver them from evil." I used to listen to imperfect statements, to vague questions, to mark all the indications of wandering thought, and inadequate effort, with a troubled eye and a despairing heart, and then to endeavor, by instruction, to make up the deficiency which I lamented. This was idle. For what good does it do to tell what is not asked for by an inquiring mind. And if it were possible to communicate knowledge before inquiry is awakened, would it be well to accustom a class to be always dependent upon communications of knowledge? What could such scholars do, out of the schoolroom, with any subject? It was blind,—

it was foolish,—it was cruel to do so. Let not such an example be followed. But the immediate effect was to crowd out some lessons, to protract school hours, to breed discontent in school and at home. Simple justice required a change, and inconvenience enforced it, and reflection discovered true motives to it, and it was made. I suspect that I have not sinned alone in this matter. Let all such sinners repent.

4. Every scholar should feel that he is a member of a body. All the arrangements in a school which tend to make him feel this are good, wholesome, and beyond estimation valuable. Eminently is this rule of limited recitations calculated to make him feel this. As the clock indicates the moment of his coming out of his seat and of his returning to it, he will not feel like a mere machine; but a feeling like what might be imagined to exist in a healthy human form, if each of the members had a separate consciousness, will animate the school. Such a feeling will not indeed be excited nor kept alive by this arrangement alone; but were a plan formed for the express purpose of fostering the social sentiment, this arrangement would be among the most important of its details.

R.

BEAUTIES OF IGNORANCE.

THE END OF THE WORLD AT HAND.—In a certain town we learn that one of the selectmen, under the influence of the Miller delusion, has resigned his office, that he may appropriate the rest of the year to the work of setting his house in order, in anticipation of the burning up of the globe a year from the present month. Another planted but half an acre of corn, supposing this, with his present supply, would suffice till that dreadful catastrophe!—*Cong. Journal.*

ANOTHER.—An old lady, named Mary Davidson, recently from Boston, has taken up her abode in the woods, in Kensington, "solitary and alone," where she is patiently waiting for the anticipated developments of 1843. Her object in thus retiring from the world is to make preparations for those great events. Some charitable persons found her there, striving to conquer the last remains of her earthly infirmities by abstaining from food. She stated that she had not eaten for nine days; that she was in every other respect perfect, and had nearly succeeded in this; and when she had, she should be wholly given up to spiritual meditation, without any earthly clog or hinderance. She was induced to eat, and thus hindered in her work of preparation, or she would ere this have been freed from all fleshly appetites.—*Amesbury Tr.*

"I am no great idolater," says Sir W. Scott, "of the learned languages, excepting for what they contain. We spend in youth that time in admiring the wards of the key, which we should employ in opening the cabinet and examining its treasures."

THE SCHOOLMASTER ABROAD.—The following is a copy of a sign in Richmond, Virginia, that "mother of states:"—

"New peeze and nise purtaters by the quart or two sens wuth for sail in this sullur—kum in."

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION.

The thirteenth anniversary of the American Institute of Instruction was held at New Bedford, on the 16th, 17th, and 18th days of August last.

The proceedings of this society are regarded with increasing interest, and its labors in behalf of education will be more and more appreciated, as the noble cause to which it is devoted becomes better understood.

We commence, in the present Number, a brief sketch of its doings, and should be glad to lay before our readers a more extended account of its lectures and debates, if our limits would permit.

DR. A. POTTER, of Union College, Schenectady, delivered the introductory lecture. His subject was, *the spirit of the age, and the need of a thorough, universal education, for the support of the institutions of this country*. The intense activity of the American people makes education doubly necessary for them. The obstacles to gaining it grow out of our blind confidence in the doctrine that resources alone will suffice without our own effort to improve them; the inclination to despise experience, and, scorning the past and present, to look only to the future,—a tendency which even our reformers share; the desire to cultivate exclusively those physical sciences which will contribute to utility; the distraction of mind caused by elections; the passion for speculation; the impetuosity of national character, which shows itself even in the rapid manner in which Americans throw off books, giving their first thoughts instead of their mature reflections; the disposition to flatter the public, to say only what will be popular, to feed the passions of the multitude, through a craving for distinction without reference to merit, and also to imitate and accept foreign customs, literature, and philosophy. Instead of this, we should have a manly culture that will insure dignity of sentiment, independence of thought, make us self-poised and self-sustained, and able to arrest popular errors, and all unfriendly influences of the age. We should have studies that tend to real patriotism. We must know how to maintain and vindicate our institutions, not blindly nor flatteringly, but understandingly. We should have a true patriotic consciousness of our advantage of newness. Our origin and the principle of our institutions should be made familiar to the young, to keep alive national honor; and this instruction should be begun in the nursery. We need a self-sustained literature; we can no longer rely entirely or mainly upon that of the old world. The philosophy of France, the political economy of Great Britain, do not answer our purpose. Our institutions, as some seem to suppose, have no magic power; but their virtue is, that they afford free scope for individual exertion.

Above all, instruction must be consecrated by religion. Knowledge is power, but it may be the power to do evil, as well as the power to do good. Moral principle must sanctify it, else our country cannot stand. Washington himself said, "Let us with caution admit that morality can exist without religion." He also recommended the foundation of institutions of education. No nation ever attempted to consolidate its government without an appeal to the religious sentiment, except the French, who tried it, and failed. The Greek and Roman influence was based upon it, and ours should be; but the time is

unfavorable to religious influence. There is too much admiration for mere talent, too much confidence in the moral power of knowledge; the philosophy of the outward man is too much relied upon; the attention to the physical wants too exclusive; the passion for wealth too great; there is too much reverence for policy; activity is depended upon rather than principle; contributions are sought rather than philanthropy; public spirit is ridiculed, self-confidence cherished, earthly prudence substituted for real wisdom, and practical atheism takes the place of religion. The great question is, What will redeem schools and literature? The only answer that could be given was, to make instruction more extensive and more thorough, and to found it on moral and religious principles.

PROFESSOR SEARS'S LECTURE.

In the afternoon, PROFESSOR SEARS, of the Newton Theological Seminary, gave a lecture upon *German philologists*. This lecture consisted principally of personal anecdotes respecting the most distinguished of this class of German scholars. The two first,—the founders of this science,—lived in the early part of the seventeenth century. The one was the son of a weaver; the other, of a cobbler. Both rose to the highest eminence, after many years of the most determined perseverance, in a state of the most abject poverty.

The professor's discourse showed great learning, but had no practical application to the condition or wants of our own country. We hope he will favor the Institute, at some future time, with another lecture, in which he will give us as learned an account of German schoolbooks, in the philosophical preparation of which it is supposed that Germany, or rather Prussia, surpasses all other countries; and also of the theory and practice of teaching, which are now in vogue in that land of despotism and universal education.

In hearing or reading an essay upon the most abstruse and recondite parts of learning, like that of the professor,—one, too, which evinces such love of scholarship,—we can hardly help being reminded that we have a class of men amongst us, who almost reverence the few great masters whose attainments are remote from the immediate wants of men, while they disparage, and even ridicule, the measures which are taken to increase the scanty stock of useful and indispensable knowledge for the mass of mankind.

But we trust the conviction is rapidly gaining ground, that the community,—like an individual,—must be supplied with necessities, before any attempt is made to pamper them with luxuries.

DEBATE.

The question for discussion in the evening was, "*Is a specific education for teachers desirable?*"

It was opened by the REV. E. W. ROBINSON, of Freetown, who asked why this occupation should not be prepared for, when preparation and special training were considered essential to the fit accomplishment of every other profession, and every trade. He thought it a very serious evil that the business of teaching should be undertaken by young men and women just entering their teens, and merely as a temporary employment, in order to gain a little ready money. He thought the private schools of this description very per-

nicious to the community, for the consequence must be, superficial instruction. The science of communication is very important, and a teacher needs, for this attainment, to know how the mind operates, and also to be acquainted with various modes of teaching, from which to select the best for the case in hand. It is the primary duty of the parent to educate his child, and the teacher is to aid him, on the principle of division of labor; but the parent should see to it that the teacher is fitted for his work. The moral influence, in every school, must be for good or for evil; it cannot be negative. Mr. R. hoped those who had seen the operation of Normal Schools would give facts. He knew of one young man who had had the advantage of instruction in the Normal School at Barre, who returned home, and collected around him all the teachers of his native place, and imparted to them, as far as practicable, the benefits he had received. He hoped to hear of similar instances of such a good spirit. When he heard the anecdote, he also heard the strong expression that if the establishment of Normal Schools had produced no other good result than that which had emanated from the exertions of this one individual, they would have been worth all the trouble and money expended upon them.

MR. G. F. THAYER, of Boston, expressed his unfeigned astonishment that this should be the question before the Institute. The necessity of specific education for teachers seemed to him to be as demonstrable as the Newtonian theory of the heavenly bodies, or any other philosophical principle. "Why," said he, "do not men send to me to make a hat, or a coat, for them?" Because he had not been *taught* to do either; and should they send their children to a teacher to be educated, who knew nothing of education? Education does not consist in merely committing lessons to memory, but in the cultivation of the intellect, of the affections, of the whole man. People talk of getting through with their education, as with a book; but neither scholars nor teachers ever get through with their education. In the present state of things, many teachers are obliged to study in the evening the lessons for the next day, and often keep only one, or a few lessons, in advance of their pupils. Such teachers may be good monitors,—fair substitutes for teachers,—but they should not be called teachers. What, then, should be said of those,—not a very small number,—who had no preparation, and who did not even study their lessons beforehand?

The time has come when the community demands a better state of things. Let us add one spark to the light, if no more. The results of Normal Schools had thus far been successful.

Upon this, MR. GARDINER, of Nantucket, rose to say that all that had been said about the education of teachers might be true; but he feared that it might mean that attendance at *some Normal School* would be considered essential to the success of a teacher in obtaining employment. He feared this would come to be a test question. He thought it should not be so. There were teachers now in the country who had never been to a Normal School, and yet they knew how to teach. The gentlemen who had spoken were well known by reputation. They enjoyed a reputation which, as every one knew, could hardly be higher, and yet they had never been to a Normal School. Normal School teachers were individuals, after all; and they might do very well with Normal School rules in all common cases; but should bad scholars

come to them, then their rule would not answer, and they were no better off for the instruction they had received.

He compared the case to that of a man going to a whale merchant, and asking for the command of one of his ships. The merchant would naturally ask, "What are your qualifications? What voyages have you made?" The applicant answers, "I have never been to sea, but I have received instruction from a landman acquainted with the subject." Would the merchant intrust his ship to this man? And the Normal School pupil was a parallel case;—not that Mr. G. objected to Normal Schools; he only feared that the fact of having attended one of those institutions would become a test question, which, he thought, it ought not to be.

MR. THAYER replied, thanking Mr. G. for his compliments, but assuring him he wished that he had himself been a Normal scholar. If he had been so, and if other teachers of the present day, who had taught school as long as himself, had been so, they would not show, by their wrinkled faces and gray hairs, the signs of premature old age, as they now do. They now had to mourn over much time lost in gaining that experience, on which their reputation, so far as they had any, was founded. He hoped all the teachers now assembled would be ready to come forward and give their own experiences in regard to this subject. Every reünion for such mutual improvement might be called, in some sense, a Normal School. In reply to Mr. G.'s comparison of the whale ships, he informed him that model schools were attached to the Normal Schools, and were kept by the pupils of the latter, alternately, for a month at a time. Here they have an opportunity of practising the theories given them, which are not arbitrary rules, but the very principles of teaching. Various methods, also, are discussed in the Normal School, on purpose that there may be no fixed rules, or at least but few of them, which might not bend to circumstances. He repeated that the education of the teacher never could end, for the powers of man were capable of indefinite advancement; and education was perpetual improvement. When he spoke of *educated* teachers, he would be understood to say that they were better than others, not that they were perfect.

Here MR. EMERSON, the president of the Institute, made a few remarks, saying that he frankly acknowledged, as he had formerly done before the Institute, that often, after having been at Lexington to see his brother Pierce teach, he wished he could give up teaching for a time, and go to learn of him. At the Normal School various methods of instruction were suggested, and were thoroughly discussed, while those who had no such advantage of previous consideration might go on with a bad method through their whole career of teaching, simply from a want of knowing different ones.

MR. ROBINSON made some remarks, to the same effect, in regard to the Lexington school. He thought the majority of teachers, who had not some previous training, did not get along as well as they appeared to; they only satisfied the ignorant; and even the best we had would have undoubtedly been far better, could they have enjoyed early advantages.

MR. GREENLEAF, of Bradford, (the author of *Greenleaf's Arithmetic*,) expressed himself very much interested in what he had heard. He had always been in favor of Normal Schools. He voted for their

establishment; but he had never visited any one of them; and, if it would not take too long, he should be glad to hear some account of the manner of teaching adopted in those institutions. He was sure of one thing, — that they could not make good teachers, nor good scholars either, out of every body. He had kept school *thirty-eight* years, and had had about 5000 scholars. He believed he had experience of all sorts; and the most general fact which he had discovered was, that those who came from the country, where the advantages of education were limited, were the best.

MR. LADD, of Westport, said he did not rise to make any attack upon Normal Schools; but he had been much amused in reading a report of a committee of the Board of Education, in reference to an examination of one of these schools. In that report, (referring to the report of President Humphrey, of Amherst-College, respecting the Barre school,) it was stated by the visiter, that he had "spent a day in hearing the exercises and examinations of the classes."

Now he, Mr. L., had no confidence in this *hearing* of examinations. It was the duty of school committees to examine the school themselves; and so it was the duty of a visiter of the Normal School himself to examine the scholars. A teacher who should be suffered to pursue his own course, uninterrupted, could make a scholar, or a school, that knew nothing, appear well. He had no confidence in such examinations, and quite as little in such reports as the one he had referred to.

In regard to the scholars who had attended the Normal Schools, he would undertake to say, that they were no better than others, if they were so good as those who had never been to them. As a school committee man, he had examined many of their scholars, and had found them very deficient. They could not answer common questions. They were unable to give the most obvious reasons for what they did. When asked any question as to the *why* and *wherefore* of processes, they were struck dumb. They might be good *automata*, but they were not teachers. The effect of these schools, he thought, would be to select the dunces from the community, and put them in the way of getting employment as public school teachers.

DR. ROBBINS, a member of the Board of Education, said he knew that the visitors of the Normal Schools did themselves ask questions, in order to test the scholarship of the pupils. As to the exception taken, by Mr. Ladd, to the phraseology of the report made by a visiter, (Dr. Humphrey,) it was a mere verbal criticism. Had the visiter or visitors of the school conducted the examination throughout, it would still be strictly true for the chairman to report that he had *heard* an examination. Knowing, as he did, that these schools are examined by the visitors, he was sorry that *words* should be seized upon, when *things* were of so much consequence.

Dr. R. then proceeded, in compliance with the request of Mr. Greenleaf, to give some account of the manner in which instruction was imparted at the Normal Schools; but the statement was comparatively brief, and therefore necessarily imperfect; for it would require a volume to detail modes of instruction in any good school.

Dr. R. added to the above remarks, that he had lately observed, in the advertisements of most high schools and academies which he had seen, a notice that special instruction would be given in the art of teaching. This showed an attempt, on the part of these institutions,

to supply a well-known demand for better teachers, now existing in the community,—an attempt which was clearly attributable to the establishment of Normal Schools.

MR. GREENLEAF wished Mr. Ladd would tell him if these Normal School teachers, whom he had examined, had certificates of qualification from the principals of those schools; because he knew that many scholars went forth from schools who were not fit to teach, and who could not be made fit in seven years, nor in seventy times seven. He should not like to be judged by many who had left his school, and every teacher must feel the injustice of such a judgment.

MR. LADD replied that they had certificates, but he seldom asked for them, for he generally found that the worst candidates had the most recommendations.

MR. GREENLEAF agreed that recommendations were no test of a man's merits, because good-natured people would generally give them when they were asked for; but his object in making the inquiry was to know whether the candidates had, or had not, certificates from the principals of the Normal Schools. He wished to know whether the principals of those schools were blameworthy.

MR. LADD acknowledged that the candidates whom he had examined, had not, to his knowledge, any certificates from the principals of the Normal Schools, but they were a fair sample of Normal School scholars.

MR. MANN said he had not intended to speak on the question then pending, but to leave its discussion to others. But statements had now been made which were at variance with what he had almost uniformly heard from other quarters; and if these statements were left unnoticed, it might be inferred from them that the system of Normal Schools was all a delusion, or something worse.

In the first place, however, he said that the charges of the gentleman from Westport seemed too vague and general to admit of any precise answer. Neither the number nor the names of the persons whom he referred to had been given. All the Normal Schools were equally implicated, because it had not been stated from which of them these candidates had come. No specification had been given of the kind or nature of the questions that could not be answered. We had not been told to what ordeal the candidates had been subjected. It is well known that the manner in which questions are put sometimes causes intimidation and failure. Now, in regard to none of these particulars, had any specific information been given. But there was one statement which Mr. M. said he was sure had been too broadly made,—more so, he believed, than could have been intended by the speaker himself. After averring that the candidates who had been examined were unable to give the reasons for the simplest processes, the gentleman had declared, without qualification, that those individuals were a *sample* of all Normal School scholars. Now, a sample, as every body knows, is that which represents the main body,—that which is like the body from which it is taken. Here, then, was a general charge of incapacity against *all* Normal School pupils. This assertion was directly contrary to the statements which had been made to him, (Mr. M.,) from almost all other sources. He had himself visited the Normal Schools frequently, and examined the scholars. When they went into schools, he had heard from their employers; he had read every report from every school committee in the State, the last three years;

and from these different sources, the almost unanimous voice had been that of gratification and approval. When the question of making a further grant for the continuance of the Normal Schools was before the Legislature, last winter, many letters had been written to him, unsolicited, strongly urging him to exert himself to the utmost in obtaining the grant, and speaking in the highest terms of the success of the teachers from the Normal Schools. He did not use his own words, but quoted the language of the school committees, who said they had "found the second-rate Normal School teachers equal to the best they had ever had before." Favorable statements, similar to these, were also made on the floor of the House of Representatives, and when the vote for the grant was taken, there was a clear majority of a hundred in its favor.

Now, against all these facts, we had the declaration of the gentleman from Westport. The audience and the public must judge between them.

As to the assertion that the Normal Schools would naturally be the receptacle of dunces, Mr. Mann said he wished the gentleman would visit those schools, and see whether any quarter were allowed to ignorance and presumption.

That every graduate of a Normal School would make a good teacher, nobody pretended. Some of the pupils who had been there, remained but a short time; some had been advised, by the principals of those schools, to leave, and enter another department of business. Incompetent men are found in all professions, and why not in this? Would New Bedford lose her reputation for maritime enterprise and skill because one of her captains had wrecked his ship? So here, these schools must be judged of by the success or failure of the body,—the generality,—of the scholars. He claimed for these pupils no immunities or privileges, beyond their strict deserts. So far from desiring that Normal School pupils should be protected or screened, if inferior to others, he would say that, having had greater advantages, they ought to be scrutinized more rigorously than others. And he felt no apprehensions for the result, if this rule were applied; for he well knew that the instruction at the Normal Schools was not superficial, but thorough. He knew that, as a general fact, the pupils who attended those schools, if not all that could be desired in the teachers of our schools, were much better than they otherwise would be. And why should not this be so? The school at Lexington, for instance, was kept by a gentleman who had the experience of a quarter of a century of teaching when he entered it. During that term of time. Mr. Pierce had revolutionized his whole system of teaching and governing; and he could now, therefore, transfer something of the wisdom acquired from the mistakes of twenty-five years, to his pupils, and save them from treading the same round of error. His pupils, he trusted, would make still further advances; and thus the art of teaching,—the most difficult and delicate of all arts ever practised or attempted by man,—would be improved. Mr. M. was sure that every friend of his country and his race would rejoice in institutions which gave fair promise,—and which so far had fulfilled the promises they gave,—of producing such results.

MR. LADD said he intended to include only two of the Normal Schools in his statements,—those at Lexington and Bridgewater. He had

examined one* from the former, and five, he believed, from the latter. It was a female who came from Lexington. He had asked her why, in computing interest, she multiplied by half the even number of months, and she could not tell. He asked one young man from Bridgewater why, in addition, he carried one for every ten, and he could not answer the question. Another young man he asked why, in subtraction, after borrowing one, as it is called, he carried one to the next left-hand figure, and he was struck dumb, as though he had never heard such a question before. Others, though deficient, they had employed; but when they kept school side by side with persons who had never been to a Normal School, he was unable to discover their superiority.

As there had been but about twenty scholars at Lexington, and about thirty at Bridgewater, he insisted that six was a sample of fifty, and therefore vindicated his first assertion.

He said he had seen no certificates from these scholars; he had not asked them for any. He placed no confidence in certificates, and never read them when offered. He did not want to know what a man carried in his pocket, but what was in his head.

DR. S. G. HOWE thought, from the statements of Mr. Ladd, that he could not know much about the Normal Schools;—if, indeed, he knew whether he had not been imposed upon by some who were not Normal School scholars. Mr. L. seemed to think that there were scholars of both sexes at Lexington, whereas there were females only. He spoke also of their being twenty scholars at Lexington, of whom he called *one* a sample, when there had been more than a hundred and fifty there. There had also been more than a hundred at Bridgewater, instead of thirty.

Dr. H. said he had some experience of the ability of the pupils at Lexington, and they were not all dunces. When his school for the blind was first opened, he was obliged to import a teacher from Europe. Afterwards he employed males of our own country at great expense; but on visiting Lexington, and becoming acquainted with the scientific and skilful modes of teaching there practised, he had engaged some of the young ladies from that school, and they had succeeded so admirably in the difficult task of instructing the blind, that he was now able to dispense with the services of all male teachers, except for music.

MR. CONGDON, of New Bedford, closed the discussion by saying that there were; at present, in that town, three Normal School teachers,—two from Lexington and one from Bridgewater;—that, although, as he believed, the teachers in that place were quite equal to those in other parts of the State, yet those educated at the Normal Schools would not suffer in comparison with any of them; and so perfectly was he satisfied of the utility of such institutions, that, hereafter, the first question he should put to an applicant for teaching would be, “Have you been to a Normal School?”

LEXINGTON NORMAL SCHOOL. The next term of the Lexington Normal School will commence on Wednesday, the 14th day of September, inst.
Lexington, Sept. 1, 1842.

S. J. MAY, *Principal.*

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